



Keeping our promise to Europe:

*The story of the von der Leyen
Commission*

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European Commission
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When the von der Leyen Commission took office in December 2019, we made a pledge to Europe: we promised to be bold and ambitious. We vowed to meet the aspirations of EU citizens and to address challenges as they emerged. Since then, this Commission has worked tirelessly to deliver on the job with which the European people entrusted it.

And we kept our promise. We stayed the course on the six priorities that we set out at the beginning of the mandate, while finding solutions to some of the greatest tests that Europe has ever faced.

From tackling a global pandemic to dealing with climate change's extreme weather events, from responding to Russia's brutal war of aggression against Ukraine to managing the worst energy crisis in decades, we rolled up our sleeves and tackled extraordinary challenges head-on. Despite the pressures of multiple crises, this Commission has managed to look ahead and address crucial challenges facing future generations of Europeans. We have shown that our Union is at its best when we are bold.

This is the story of the von der Leyen Commission.



Managing crises head-on

Defeating the pandemic

When the world was hit by the worst pandemic of our generation, **the Commission took up the charge to protect lives, livelihoods and our economy.**

We helped research and roll out life-saving vaccines in record time. We made sure that all Europeans got access to vaccines at the same time, no matter which Member State they lived in. We secured up to **4.6 billion vaccine doses**, on behalf of Member States, to protect Europeans and to share with partner countries. **Over 80 % of the EU adult population has received at least the first vaccination course.**



As vaccination allowed countries to open their borders cautiously, we developed practical tools to enable Europeans to travel safely. **We set up the EU Digital COVID Certificate**, connecting 78 countries and territories. This has now become the model for a global system to facilitate mobility and protect citizens across the world from pandemics.

As the lockdowns threatened to shut down companies and wipe out jobs, we developed an instrument for temporary Support to mitigate Unemployment Risks in an Emergency (SURE). In 2020, it kept **2.5 million companies open** and **31.5 million Europeans employed**, avoiding a massive economic and social crisis. And when borders were closed and goods got stuck on the road, we launched **Green Lanes to facilitate circulation and prevent shortages of basic goods.**

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



The Commission helped to **finance the development of effective vaccines** by pharmaceutical companies with the **promise of purchasing later from those that would be successful.**

It took only 6 months between the adoption of the EU Vaccines Strategy and the delivery of the first batches of COVID-19 vaccines to Member States.





Just **15 weeks** after the Commission's proposal, the **EU Digital COVID Certificate** was available for citizens in every Member State to facilitate safer travel for all.

By summer 2023, **2.2 billion EU Digital COVID Certificates had been issued**, helping Europeans to travel safely. 78 countries and territories were connected to the **EU Gateway**, which allows authorities to verify Digital Certificates in a secure way that guarantees individual privacy.



Boiana from Bulgaria, a medicine graduate turned journalist, resumed medical service during the COVID-19 pandemic as a nurse on the frontline. In 2023, she trained as a paramedic for **Bulgaria's new emergency medical helicopters, bought with EU funds and with the help of NextGenerationEU**. Expecting her first child, she is looking forward to joining the helicopter fleet.



Team Europe (EU institutions and Member States) **mobilised €53.7 billion to help partner countries** deal with the immediate health emergency, to strengthen their healthcare systems, and to mitigate the socio-economic consequences.





We co-launched the **Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator initiative** (ACT-Accelerator) to promote the development and equitable access by the whole world to COVID-19 vaccines and treatments.

At the heart of the ACT-Accelerator, there was **COVAX - a multilateral effort to bring vaccines to developing countries**. As Team Europe, we remain the largest donor of COVID-19 vaccines through COVAX.

We took **unprecedented assistance measures** to help Europeans cope with the **social and economic challenges** resulting from the pandemic.

SURE, our instrument to finance short-term employment schemes across the EU, helped **support about 31.5 million employees and self-employed people and over 2.5 million businesses** in 2020. This represented **almost one third of total employment and over one quarter of businesses** in the beneficiary Member States. Another **9 million people** and over **900 000 businesses** received support in 2021. In total, **€98.4 billion of financial assistance was disbursed to 19 Member States under SURE**.

SURE

- **€98.4 billion** of financial assistance disbursed to **19 Member States**.
- Supported some **31.5 million employees and self-employed people** and over **2.5 million businesses** in 2020.



Thanks to the EU's high credit rating, **SURE** also helped Member States save an estimated **€9 billion** in interest payments.



The **protection of employment** facilitated Europe's **rapid economic rebound in 2021**.



The Commission put forward the **Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative and the Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative Plus (CRII and CRII+)**. These instruments **helped Member States buy medical equipment, pay health workers, and support workers and SMEs** by making expenditures related to COVID eligible under Cohesion Policy and making that eligibility retroactive.



Looking towards the future, we have started building a **European Health Union to prepare and respond to health crises together**. We are making sure that medical supplies are available and affordable, and that Member States work together to improve prevention, treatment and aftercare for all sorts of diseases, particularly **cancer** thanks to the **Europe's Beating Cancer Plan**.

Powering Europe's recovery

Just as vaccines reached all Europeans at the same time, **we worked to ensure that the economies of all Member States, especially those worst hit by the pandemic, could recover rapidly.**

At a time when we **faced the deepest recession** since World War II, **we achieved the strongest recovery** since the post-war boom.

This recovery was possible because we developed a bold new plan to raise money on the market and invest together in Europe's recovery and resilience.



NextGenerationEU has been a boost of confidence for our economy. Worth more than **€800 billion**, it is propelling our economies with a combination of investment and reforms. Hundreds of projects funded by NextGenerationEU are already **delivering tangible results for Europeans**, from offshore wind farms to electric trains, from top-notch digital public services to world-class hospitals. In parallel, EU Member States are using NextGenerationEU strategically to carry out deep reforms, like labour market reforms, pension reforms, and accelerated permitting for renewables. This is our Union powering Europe's prosperity.

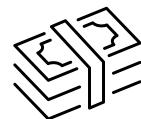


The **Koralmbahn**, a new 130 km railway between the **Austrian cities** of Graz and Klagenfurt, **shortens travel time from 3 hours to 45 minutes**. With **investments of €543 million from NextGenerationEU**, the project creates tangible benefits for the 1.1 million inhabitants living in the region.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



NextGenerationEU puts an emphasis on the **clean and digital transitions**. Payments to Member States are conditional on measurable and progressive results, motivating authorities to deliver on the reforms and investments to which they have committed.



As of February 2024, with NextGenerationEU, **we have disbursed close to €225 billion**, bringing about Europe's economic recovery after the pandemic and increasing our Union's social and economic resilience.



Its ambitious funding targets for climate action (37 %) and digital action (20 %) have been amply exceeded, with **40 % of funds spent on climate action, and 26 % spent on digital action**. The funds also significantly support social and cohesion actions.

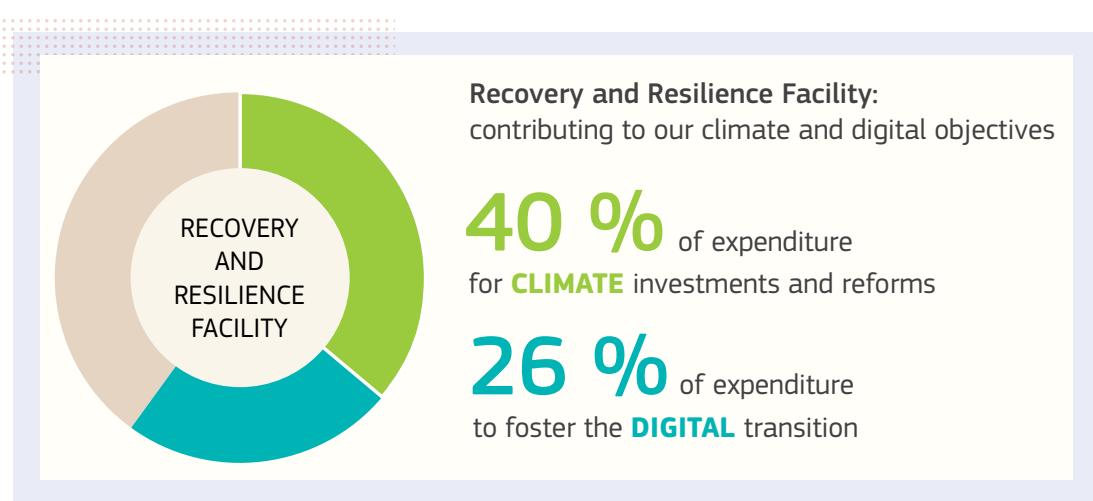
5.8 million people

in the EU have benefitted from protection measures against climate-related disasters

Thanks to climate action investments under NextGenerationEU, **5.8 million people in the EU have benefitted from protection measures against climate-related disasters**, and 22 million megawatts-hours in energy consumption have been saved.



In France, NextGenerationEU financed the energy-efficient renovation of 20 000 social dwellings. **In Spain**, it supported over 60 companies in research and innovation for sustainable mobility.





We are also **providing finance for national projects that address climate change mitigation**. For example, **Greece's recovery plan** includes measures to boost civil protection and response efforts in the face of wildfires and floods, as well as the climate-proofing of transport infrastructure.



The **Slovenian recovery plan** includes **measures to address floods**. Following flash floods in August 2023, we set up a task force, featuring Commission and Slovenian representatives, to study ways of better supporting affected areas with existing EU funding.



Under NextGenerationEU, **almost 18 million households in the EU have received high-speed Internet access, and 247 million users have benefited from new or improved public digital services**.



As part of the reforms under NextGenerationEU, **Member States have also reduced unnecessary administrative burdens and improved their business environment**. Italy, for example, introduced several reforms to improve its business environment, notably reducing the time to set up a business to 4 days.

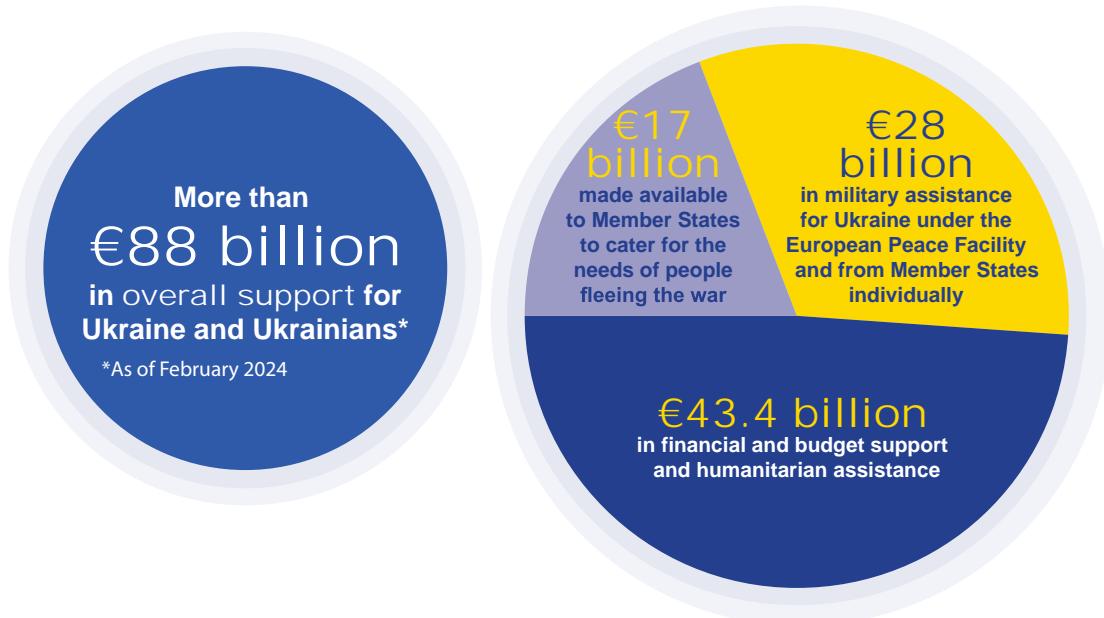


European companies are seizing the opportunities offered by NextGenerationEU. In a truly European partnership, Swedish Elekta and Dutch Philips are supplying key components for the installation of a **magnetic resonance linear accelerator for cancer treatment in Malta, one of about 100 such machines worldwide**.

A firm response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine

As Russian tanks crossed the border, **our Union stood up for Ukraine with unity, strength and resolve**. And the Commission, once more, rose to the occasion. We paved the way to **hosting more than 4 million Ukrainian refugees in the EU**. We organised the delivery of unprecedented humanitarian, financial and military assistance from the EU and Member States, reaching **over €88 billion so far, including €28 billion in military support**. And we are working closely with our G7 partners to make sure every euro goes where it is most needed in Ukraine.

The dictator in the Kremlin has gambled on the disunity of Europeans. Together, we proved him wrong. We will stand by Ukraine for as long as it takes. Through the new **Ukraine Facility**, we will deliver another **€50 billion over the next 4 years** to help provide basic services – keep schools open, pay salaries and pensions, while Ukraine's people continue to fight back against the invader. Every victory for Ukraine against the aggressor is also a victory for our common security in Europe.



At the same time, we have supported Ukraine every step of the way as it works hard to reform and **get closer to the EU**. Recognising the country's tremendous progress and responding to the aspirations of the Ukrainian people, our Union took the historic decision to **open accession negotiations with Ukraine**, based on the Commission's recommendation.

We also helped tackle the impact of Russia's aggression worldwide. As Russia's war threatened to trigger a global food crisis, we came up with our trademark solutions to bring Ukraine's crops to countries that needed them most.

About 122 million tonnes of Ukrainian goods exported



© Adobe Stock

*Between May 2022 and January 2024

We opened **Solidarity Lanes**, which have helped export **122 million tonnes of Ukrainian goods**, including nearly **64 million tonnes of agricultural products mainly for export**.

At the same time, we are at the forefront of efforts to hold Russia accountable for its actions and pay for the destruction that it has caused. We have introduced **13 packages of sanctions** to cripple Moscow's war machine. We have immobilised **over €200 billion of Russian Central Bank assets in the EU**. We are supporting the collection of evidence on Russia's war crimes and its crime of aggression. Because Europe stands up for international law.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



Russia's war against Ukraine has only brought the EU and Ukraine closer together: Ukraine is now an **official candidate to join the EU and accession negotiations have been greenlighted** upon a recommendation by the Commission.



Since the beginning of the war, we have mobilised and developed unique means of economic, humanitarian, and military assistance, bringing the total support provided by the EU and its Member States to **over €88 billion**.

To ensure that Ukraine can continue to count on the funding that it needs, we put forward the **Ukraine Facility**, which will provide the country with up to **€50 billion in the form of grants and concessional loans** between 2024 and 2027.

Ukraine Facility



The Commission has taken a leading role in coordinating international economic support for Ukraine by hosting the Secretariat of the G7-led **Multi-Agency Donor Coordination Platform**.



Thanks to our Solidarity Lanes, we created **alternative routes for Ukrainian trade** when Russia blockaded transit through the Black Sea. Between May 2022 and January 2024, the Solidarity Lanes allowed the **export of 122 million tonnes of goods** and the **import of 45 million tonnes**, with a total value estimated at around **€139 billion**.



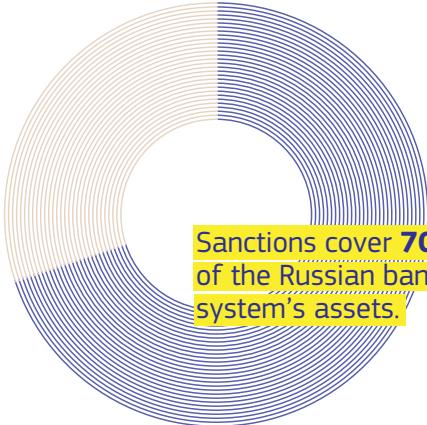
The EU and its Member States have also mobilised **over €28 billion in military support** to help Ukraine defend itself, including over **€6 billion from the European Peace Facility**. Furthermore, the EU Military Assistance Mission for Ukraine has so far **trained over 40 000 Ukrainian soldiers**.



To a record extent and in record time, the Commission has prepared and implemented **13 packages of wide-ranging sanctions** against the Kremlin and its allies, to cripple their ability to finance and conduct the war.

EU sanctions currently apply to over **2 000 individuals and entities**. Over **€28 billion of their private assets** are frozen in the EU.

The EU agreed to **exclude key Russian banks** from the SWIFT system



58 % of the EU's exports to Russia before the invasion, and 61 % of pre-war imports, are covered by our sanctions. We have **banned the import of seaborne crude oil and refined petroleum products from Russia**. Since about half of Russia's total oil exports used to go to the EU (€71 billion in 2021), the impact has been significant.

The Commission and the High Representative made a proposal, now adopted by Member States, to **use the extraordinary revenue** arising from the management in the EU of immobilised Russian Central Bank assets **to support the recovery and reconstruction of Ukraine**.

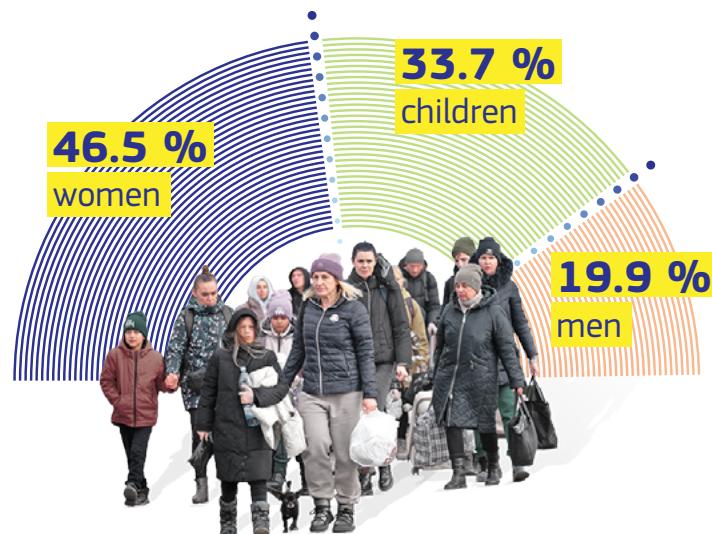


Khrystyna is one of many **Ukrainians** who fled from the Russian aggression. She was **welcomed in the Limburg region of the Netherlands**. Thanks to the **Temporary Protection Directive**, she can **now earn her living by working in the very hotel where she first stayed upon arriving** in the Netherlands.



We acted to provide shelter for people fleeing the war in Ukraine by activating the Temporary Protection Directive. **Today, over 4 million people, mainly women and children coming from Ukraine, enjoy basic rights in the EU** such as access to the labour market, medical care, and education for children.

Temporary protection to over **4 million individuals**



As part of the largest operation under the **EU Civil Protection Mechanism**, we have provided Ukraine with over 144 000 tonnes of aid, and we have established the medical evacuation (Medevac) system, which has enabled the **evacuation of over 3 000 Ukrainian patients to hospitals in 22 European countries**.

Strengthening Europe's resilience, security and defence capabilities

As the strategic environment around us has fundamentally changed, Europe needs to face up to a new responsibility. This is why this Commission is developing a new **European Defence Industrial Strategy**. It will bring strategic focus and will help to tie together Member States' and European firms' efforts - from research to industrialisation and commercialisation of new systems, on to production ramp-up, coordinated procurement and security of supply. Because **peace requires security**.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



We have boosted the physical security of critical infrastructure and entities thanks to the **Critical Entities Resilience Directive**, which requires that Member States carry out risk assessments of their critical sectors; and with the **Critical Infrastructure Blueprint** we set a framework for a unified response to common critical infrastructure incidents.



The Commission has acted to **counter the rise of disinformation and misinformation**, especially online. We strengthened the **Code of Practice on Disinformation**, which includes major technology companies, platforms and civil society. With the **Digital Services Act** we added additional means to prevent false information from spreading online.



We have stepped up the **fight against organised crime and terrorism offline and online**. We have set out rules to fight new forms of human trafficking; we have laid out a roadmap in the fight against criminal networks, notably those involved in drug trafficking. To fight terrorism and prevent radicalisation, rules have been put in place requiring that online platforms **remove online terrorist content within 1 hour**.



We have boosted **cross-border cooperation among police and law enforcement authorities**. Europol and Eurojust have been given reinforced mandates to better support national authorities.



The Commission worked to enable the conditions that allowed the safe and successful **enlargement of the Schengen area to Croatia, Romania, and Bulgaria**, while at the same time updating its governance and its rules. **A yearly Schengen cycle was launched in 2022**, starting each year with a **State of Schengen Report**, which identifies risks and security gaps.



In February 2024, an agreement was reached by co-legislators on an updated **Schengen Borders Code**. The new code establishes a mechanism to introduce temporary travel restrictions at the external border in case of health emergencies. The code also gives Member States the means to fight the instrumentalisation of migrants by third-countries and non-state actors.



We have **boosted our strong partnership with NATO**. Through a new **Joint Declaration on EU-NATO Cooperation**, we are developing our common work on hybrid threats, cyber, terrorism, and the security implications of climate change. We launched the **EU-NATO Task Force on resilience of critical infrastructure** to better prevent common disruptions to essential services and address joint security challenges in the area of critical infrastructure.



With the **European Defence Fund**, the **European Defence Industry Reinforcement Through Common Procurement Act**, and the **Act in Support of Ammunition Production**, we are mobilising Europe's defence industry to manufacture more of our security at home. Short-term measures in response to the full-scale invasion of Ukraine will soon be substituted by the **European Defence Industry Programme**.

Common solutions to the worst energy crisis in decades

While launching its assault on Ukraine, Russia used energy to blackmail us, triggering an energy crisis in Europe and the fear of blackouts. Once again, our Union pulled together.

With the Commission's groundbreaking **REPowerEU plan**, we secured our energy supplies and reduced our dependence on Russia. We diversified our supplies by finding reliable new partners. We **reduced our gas use by 18 %** - thanks to tremendous efforts by European people and companies. And we **doubled down on the roll-out of renewables**.

For the first time, we produced more electricity from wind in the EU than from gas last year. We have almost doubled the amount of solar energy produced in Europe. **And installations of solar and wind energy have increased on an annual basis by around 35 %.**

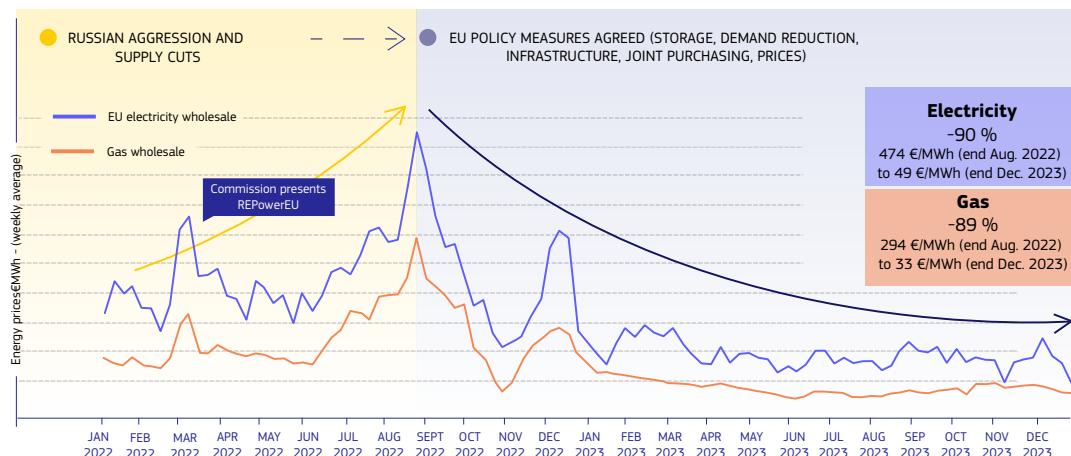
To address the spike in energy prices caused by Russia's blackmail, which caused hardship for our people and companies, we put in place an approach that had already proved successful during the pandemic.

We put in place the **EU Energy Platform** to pool demand for gas and launch competitive tenders, giving our companies a stronger bargaining position on global markets. And it works. In 2023, European buyers had access to **42 billion cubic metres of gas through the Platform**. And the latest EU joint tender from February 2024 was three times oversubscribed attracting a total volume of 97.4 billion cubic metres from international suppliers.

Thanks to the combined actions that we took, **today's prices are almost 10 times lower than they were at the height of the crisis**. And Europe's dependence on fossil fuels from Russia is over, once and for all.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Evolution of **gas and electricity** prices



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

REPowerEU

Our investment plan, aiming to mobilise close to €300 billion, to reduce dependence on Russian fossil fuels and fast forward the clean transition

SAVING ENERGY

By coordinating our gas demand reduction



18 %

Drop in demand
between August 2022
and December 2023

101 bcm (*)
of gas **saved**

99 %

of **gas storage capacity**
was full in November 2023
(overachieving our 90 % target by
1 November 2023)

EU ENERGY PLATFORM

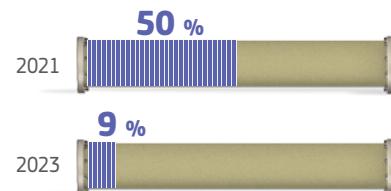
In the four EU tenders for joint gas purchasing organised under the EU Energy Platform in 2023, **113 companies** across the EU expressed gas demand of over 54 bcm.

European buyers received offers for
42 bcm of gas through the Platform in 2023.

DIVERSIFYING OUR SUPPLY

Through reliable new suppliers

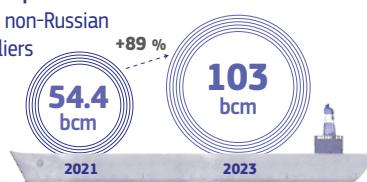
PERCENTAGE OF RUSSIAN PIPELINE GAS IMPORTS OF TOTAL EU GAS



Current main supplier to the EU: **Norway**
(30 % of pipeline imports in 2023)

LNG

LNG imports
from non-Russian
suppliers

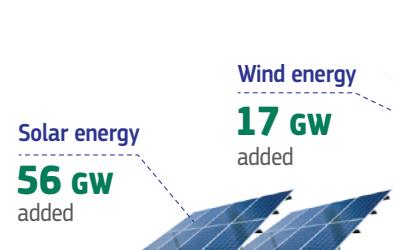


Current main LNG supplier to the EU:
United States (46 % of LNG imports)

INVESTING IN RENEWABLES

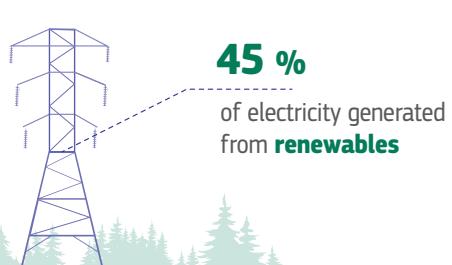
Accelerating the transition to more sustainable and cheaper energy

RENEWABLES DEPLOYMENT (2023)



(*) bcm = billion cubic metres.

ELECTRICITY GENERATED (2023)



45 %

of electricity generated
from **renewables**

Providing support when disaster hits

Throughout the mandate, the Commission has boosted Europe's capacity to provide vital support to countries hit by disaster, from floods to forest fires, from earthquakes to medical emergencies.

The **EU Civil Protection Mechanism** has channelled support to all parts of the continent and beyond. Our teams were at work to rescue people and clear the rubble just hours after deadly **earthquakes ravaged Albania, Croatia and Türkiye**. They were quick with support on the ground following devastating **floods in Belgium, Germany, Italy and Slovenia**.

Since 2019, we have provided **over €3 billion through the EU Solidarity Fund** to Member States and accession countries hit by natural disasters and public health emergencies.



Our firefighting fleet has helped battle wildfires from Greece to Portugal, from France to Albania. And across the Atlantic too: In a historic first, **Canada turned to Europe for support when it was hit by the worst forest fires in recent times**. And Europe answered the call: Hundreds of European firefighters combatted the violent fires which ravaged Canada's forests.

But the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, as well as the pandemic, have shown that we need to do more to respond to disasters. This is why we created **rescEU**: a common reserve of European resources, including a fleet of firefighting planes and helicopters, medical evacuation planes, and stockpiles of medical items. A real European safety net for emergencies.

When disaster strikes, our Union is now better equipped than ever to support Europeans – and the rest of the world. Since 2020, we have coordinated **232 Humanitarian Air Bridge operations, responding to 12 crises worldwide**, most recently the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza.



Sweden is contributing two more scooter aircraft to the **EU's rescEU wildfire fighting fleet**, raising the total number of Swedish planes that are ready for emergency operations, both nationally and internationally, to four.



The **earthquake** that hit **Croatia** in 2020 destroyed the University Hospital Centre in Zagreb. With the help of **EU funds**, the hospital **is now being renovated**, providing better **healthcare for almost half a million residents** of the Zagreb area.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

The von der Leyen Commission has continued to provide assistance across the world. **Over the past 4 years, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism has been activated on over 400 occasions.**

As borders started to close at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, **we repatriated over 100 000 people back to Europe**, bringing Europeans and their families home.



During the pandemic, the Commission coordinated and co-financed the delivery of **190 million medical and personal protective equipment items, including ventilators, to third countries.**

Since Russia launched its war of aggression against Ukraine, we have organised **the largest operation in the history of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, delivering 144 000 tonnes of aid.**

In response to violent wildfires across Europe, the Mechanism has responded by enabling the deployment of firefighting planes, helicopters and firefighting personnel. When forest fires devastated Cyprus, Greece, Italy, and Tunisia in 2023, around **2 000 personnel, including firefighters, were sent to tackle the emergency.**



Since 2019, we have established **rescEU** medical stockpiles across Europe, containing crucial equipment such as ventilators, personal protective equipment, medicines, and chemical, radiological, nuclear and biological equipment.



The Commission has also established global stockpiles of aid – the **European Humanitarian Response Capacity** – hosted in Latin America, the Middle East, Asia, and Europe. Through the Capacity, the EU aims to send aid faster to crisis zones.



The EU remains a world-leading humanitarian donor. Since December 2019, EU humanitarian funding has exceeded **€11 billion**. We have responded to humanitarian emergencies across the world: from Afghanistan to Sudan, and Gaza most recently.

Keeping the course on our priorities

The European Green Deal: a growth strategy that protects the climate

Right at the start of our mandate, we rallied Europe around a common goal: to develop a new growth model, the **European Green Deal**, based on a clean and circular economy. We set ourselves targets to **become climate neutral by 2050**. Because only what gets measured, gets done. With this compass, we pushed forward a clean transition that protects people and the planet, is economically sound and socially fair.

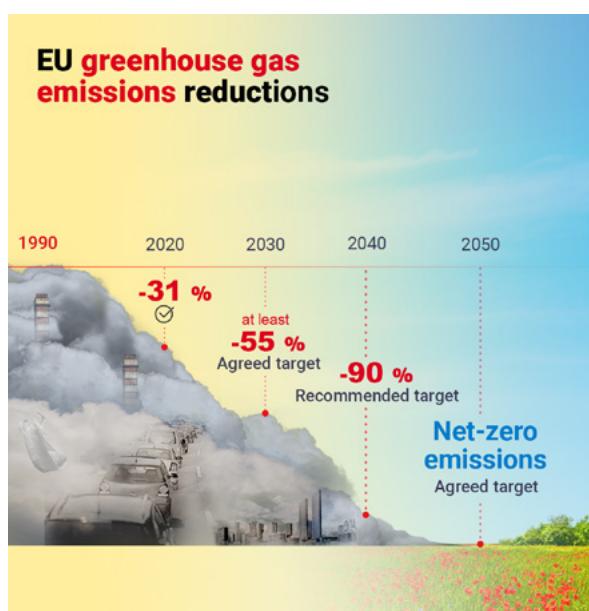


Our vision is clear: **Europe should remain a prime destination for investments that bring stable, future-proof, quality jobs, with a strong industrial base.**

We put in place a framework to deliver a **reduction of at least 55 % of greenhouse gas emissions in comparison to 1990 by the end of this decade**. We ramped up EU-level investments. **Almost €400 billion of EU funds from NextGenerationEU and cohesion policy are funding climate-related projects**. We set out a robust framework for sustainable finance and became the biggest issuer of green bonds worldwide.

And we have shown that it is possible to decouple economic growth from emissions: **since 1990, greenhouse gas emissions have dropped by 32.5 %, and our economy has grown by close to 70 %**.

And we have fostered the development of innovative technologies that we need to reduce emissions. With the **Net-Zero Industry Act**, we will dramatically speed up permitting processes for clean tech manufacturing and we will support European businesses to deliver the transition while maintaining their competitive edge.





Near Cologne, Germany, Lyondell Basell supported by the **EU's Innovation Fund**, is developing a commercially viable **plastic waste recycling plant that will run 100 % on electricity**. The project will thus reduce the problem of plastic trash and resource scarcity, while being **carbon-neutral**.

But the rest of the world needs to level up. To address carbon leakage, we put in place the **Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism**. This helps to make sure that emissions are reduced wherever they are produced and the EU's climate objectives are not undermined.

From the beginning, we promised to Europeans to work on making the transition socially fair. We kept our promise. We set up the **Just Transition Fund and the Social Climate Fund**, to support those who are more vulnerable and face the biggest challenges to adapt.

Our Green Deal is delivering on its objectives - Europe is on track to achieve its climate targets. And we are turning the necessary decarbonisation of our industries into a growth opportunity.

Eastern Wielkopolska, a lignite-mining region of **Poland**, is pursuing an ambitious path towards climate neutrality. Supported by the **EU's Just Transition Fund and the Innovation Fund**, the region could build **Poland's first electrolyzers to produce hydrogen**. By actively reskilling workers, **nobody is left behind on the way towards climate neutrality**.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



In 2021, the EU adopted its first **European Climate Law**, setting in stone Europe's goals to become **climate-neutral by 2050**, as well as a target of **55 % less emissions by 2030**, in comparison to 1990. In February 2024, the Commission recommended an additional intermediate target of 90 % less emissions by 2040.



During this mandate, the Commission came forward with the **Just Transition Fund**. Supported by **€19.7 billion** in finance, it has supported vulnerable regions to diversify economic activities and address the socio-economic impact of the clean transition.



The Commission has supported farmers in 22 Member States with €330 million to cope with the impacts of climate events and higher input costs. We have also given Member States flexibility to complement EU support by up to 200 % with national funds, and to provide **higher advance payments of Common Agricultural Policy funds** to improve farmers' cash flow.



Since 2019, we have approved seven major **Important Projects of Common European Interest** (IPCEIs) involving 22 Member States. These ambitious projects concern, for example, batteries, microelectronics, hydrogen, and cloud computing. **With State aid amounting to €32.9 billion, they will unlock at least €50.3 billion of additional private investments.**



To **better use scarce resources and reduce waste**, we adopted measures to make products more sustainable, reducing the 2.2 billion tonnes of waste that the EU produces every year.



Our strong focus on making smarter use of materials has been on display with the **New European Bauhaus**. With over 600 official partner organisations ranging from EU-wide networks to local initiatives, **the Bauhaus now reaches millions of citizens**.



During this term, the Commission updated the **EU Emissions Trading System (ETS)** to cover more activities, motivating more economic sectors to implement reforms towards the clean transition. This generates more revenue that will be reinvested in innovation, climate action, and social support, for example through the **Innovation Fund, the Modernisation Fund, and the Social Climate Fund**.



The Commission wants to ensure that our **industries are fit for the green era**. We have supported **battery manufacturing** in the EU and the development of **clean hydrogen**. We have also set out requirements to ensure that **EV charging stations will be available every 60 km** in the trans-European transport network. With our **Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism**, we have addressed carbon leakage, making sure that emissions are reduced wherever they are produced, not simply off-shored.



The Commission's **Zero Pollution Action Plan** resulted in proposals for modernised standards on water quality, air quality, industrial emissions and chemicals.



We spearheaded the **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework**, agreed at the COP15 on biological diversity, and the **UN High Seas Treaty**.



We have launched a series of **clean transition dialogues with key industrial sectors**. We have launched dialogues with the **hydrogen sector, energy intensive industries and clean tech**. Dialogues on critical raw materials, mobility, infrastructure, and forestry will take place in 2024.

Building Europe's digital leadership

In the past years, Europe has achieved more for citizens and businesses in the digital space than ever before.

We set a clear vision at the start of the mandate: **ensure that our society benefits from technology and that innovation boosts our competitiveness, while minimising risks for citizens.**

We fulfilled our mandate. Across Europe, **we have invested billions in the expansion of fibre optics and 5G**. We have connected rural regions and equipped hundreds of thousands of workers with skills for the digital future. We delivered a **human-centred vision of the digital space and consolidated our technological leadership**.

In 2019, none of the top eight supercomputers were European. Today, the **EU is home to four of the most powerful computers in the world** – based in Finland, Italy, Spain and Germany.



© Adobe Stock

LUMI is one of our **world-class supercomputers**. It means 'snow' in Finnish, and thanks to its location in **northern Finland**, it needs less energy for cooling. LUMI uses **100 % hydropower**, and its waste heat is **used to heat hundreds of households in the area**.



©CSC

At the same time, Europe has become the global pioneer of citizen's rights online. With the **Digital Services Act**, we set out the basic principles for all digital companies in Europe, as well as clear rights for users. We defined the special responsibilities of large internet platforms on the content they promote and propagate – to help tackle hate speech and disinformation, for instance, and to protect minors. And with the **Digital Markets Act**, we are ensuring that major digital companies play by fair rules and ensure transparency and legal certainty for EU businesses.

The same goes for Artificial Intelligence. With our innovation-friendly **AI Act**, the EU is the first and so far only continent to have a dedicated AI regulation in place, focused on high-risk uses. More than a rulebook, **the AI Act is a springboard for our companies to lead the way in developing trustworthy AI**.

We know that AI can boost the productivity of our companies tremendously. We are therefore helping them to integrate AI in their business processes. For instance, **we are providing start-ups and SMEs with access to our world-class supercomputers**, so that they can develop, train and test large AI models.



Nines, a **Spaniard** living in Vigo with her husband and three children, is undergoing treatment for metastatic breast cancer. She has been chosen to participate in the **DIPCAN project** - a cancer study funded under **NextGenerationEU**, which will reach 2 000 patients. It integrates a **patient's health data** and **Artificial Intelligence** to identify the best and most efficient treatment for each individual. Nines is receiving personalised treatment and her doctors are confident that, thanks to the more efficient treatments enabled by DIPCAN's diagnosis, her life expectancy can increase. **Nines's message: "More research, more life".**

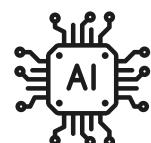
At the same time, we have developed a secure way to **tap into the economic potential of data**. With the **Data Act**, we will incentivise the sharing of data by those who generate it and make our cloud markets more competitive – adding tens of billions of euro to our GDP by 2028.

Europe's Digital Decade delivers.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



During this term, Europe has invested more in digital than ever before. Today, **8 in 10 Europeans enjoy access to the 5G network**. Approximately 56 % of all EU households are connected to fibre-optic cables.



Since its first day in office, the von der Leyen Commission has been harnessing the potential of emerging technologies, while protecting citizens. With the **AI Act**, the EU is becoming the **first jurisdiction in the world to ensure AI remains safe and human centred**. This Commission has set an ambitious goal of investing more than €1 billion per year in AI research and innovation. **In 2022, we mobilised €3 billion for AI research and development.**



The **Data Governance Act**, in place since September 2023, lays down requirements to increase trust in data intermediaries and strengthens data-sharing mechanisms.



The **Digital Services Act** sets out a new standard for the accountability of online platforms. Under the Act, Very Large Online Platforms or Search Engines reaching more than 45 million users monthly are subject to more stringent rules. To date, **22 services have been designated as Very Large Online Platforms or Search Engines**.



With the **Digital Markets Act**, the EU has set a global milestone to regulate the economic power of digital "gatekeepers", some of the largest digital global companies. In September 2023, the Commission designated **six gatekeepers under the Act** – Alphabet, Amazon, Apple, ByteDance, Meta and Microsoft – accounting together for a total of 22 core platform services.



To give Europeans a safe and secure digital identity, this Commission has proposed a new **Digital Identity Wallet**. From the end of 2026, the Wallet will allow EU citizens to have a **secure digital identity that protects personal data**.



To bolster our resilience to cyber threats, the Commission has introduced the **NIS2 Directive**, expanding cybersecurity rules to cover new sectors, such as telecoms providers, postal services, public administration, and healthcare.



The Commission introduced also a **Cyber Resilience Act**, setting out cybersecurity requirements for all hardware and software products on the European market, from baby monitors and computer games to firewalls and routers.



The **EU Cyber Solidarity Act** proposes measures to boost cyber preparedness for critical entities and reinforce crisis management and response capabilities.



To prepare Europeans for the digital transition, the Commission has put in place initiatives to support the increase in the number of ICT graduates, and to support citizens in their efforts to gain new digital skills including the **Cybersecurity Skills Academy** and the **Digital Skills and Jobs Platform**.



Under the **Digital Decade Policy Programme**, the Commission continues to track Europe's performance in four areas: citizens' digital skills; take-up of new technologies by businesses, like AI, data and cloud; advancing the EU's connectivity, computing and data infrastructures; and making public services and administration available online. The Programme has established **concrete targets to be achieved by 2030, notably the goal to ensure 80 % of those aged 16-74 have basic digital skills**.

A hands-on approach to foster Europe's industrial competitiveness

Europe's industry is at the centre of our mission to deliver prosperity for our people. And it is key to our ambition to build a clean economy. To help our industry remain competitive globally during the transition, **we developed a fast-track approach to supporting key sectors, from chips to clean tech, from batteries to wind**. This combines investment, skills, smart regulatory facilities and cooperation with partners.

We tested this approach with the **European Chips Act**, to boost the manufacturing of chips and support scale-up and innovation across the value chain. And it worked. **The European Chips Act has already generated over €100 billion of planned investments** along the entire value chain. And it is creating good jobs across Europe, from Magdeburg to Catania, from Dublin to Dresden, from Wrocław to Grenoble.

The region of **Saxony**, in eastern Germany, has successfully mastered a transition to become one of the preeminent technology hubs in Europe, with a special focus on electronics. **EU funding** has played a key role and has helped attract additional investments. The most prominent project is an investment of **€5 billion** by Infineon in a new chip production facility, which should create around 1 000 new, highly skilled jobs. Infineon is expecting **€1 billion in public funding**.



We are applying the same approach to make sure that the future of our clean tech industry is made in Europe. Our **Net-Zero Industry Act** will help the EU build a strong domestic manufacturing capacity. By 2030, at least 40 % of our demand for net-zero technologies should be covered by European manufacturing capacity. Our strategic projects and valleys, permitting reforms and targeted procurement and auction rules, can help the EU to **become a global frontrunner in the clean energy transition and to create green, quality jobs at home**.

Similarly, we developed the **Critical Raw Materials Act** to secure access for our companies to essential materials, which are key to Europe's competitiveness and economic security. Today, Europe sources the lion's share of its rare earths and other critical raw materials from China. Geopolitical tensions or events such as the pandemic could at any time trigger serious downstream production problems in Europe. This is why we developed the new 'De-risk, not decouple' principle towards China, which is by now accepted by EU Member States and G7 partners. We are developing new projects in Europe, but also beneficial strategic partnerships with countries such as Australia, Chile and Canada, to secure and process critical raw materials and diversify the supply chains of European companies.

And to adapt to geopolitical realities, we developed **our first-ever Economic Security Strategy**, with concrete steps to increase our resilience and de-risk our economy. There too, our approach is pragmatic: promotion of Europe's own capacities in key sectors, protection against dependencies and partnerships to advance shared interests. **This is making Europe stronger and safer**.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



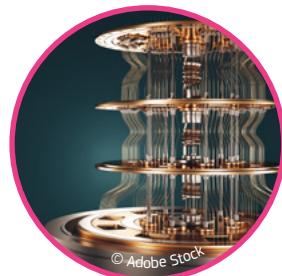
The Commission **has spurred investment, innovation, and creativity** in the economy. With the support of our InvestEU programme, we aim to mobilise over **€372 billion of private and public investment in our green, digital, and social priorities**. To date, **175 projects have been approved and supported by InvestEU**.



In February 2024, co-legislators agreed on the **most comprehensive reform** of the **economic governance rules** since the financial crisis. The new rules will help to **bring public finances back on track** and **provide enough space for investment**.



In line with the Green Deal Industrial Plan, the Commission has adopted a **State aid Temporary Crisis and Transition Framework**, approving almost **€13 billion** in State aid measures to **speed up financing for clean tech production**.



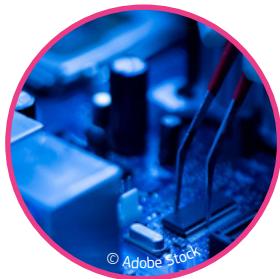
In June 2023 the Commission and the High Representative presented the **first-ever European Economic Security Strategy**. The Strategy focuses on **four categories of risk**: risks to the resilience of supply chains, to the security of critical infrastructure, to technology security and technology leakage, and risks of weaponisation of economic dependencies and economic coercion. In October 2023 the Commission identified **four critical areas for economic security: advanced semiconductor technologies, AI technologies, quantum technologies, and biotechnologies**.



During this term, the Commission introduced the **EU Taxonomy**, providing a common definition for environmentally sustainable economic activities. Since 2021, the EU Taxonomy has covered around two thirds of greenhouse gas emissions in Europe. On average, **about 20 % of capital expenditure by large, listed EU companies are taxonomy-aligned**.



The Commission also set a legal framework for a **Green Bond Standard**. Funds raised by this type of bond will be **100 % aligned with the high environmental standards of the EU Taxonomy**.



The Commission has led the way worldwide in setting rules for previously unregulated crypto assets. The **Markets in Crypto-Assets Regulation** brings crypto-assets and their service providers under regulation and supervision.



During this mandate, the Commission introduced the **Digital Operational Resilience Act**, which intends to enhance the cybersecurity of Europe's financial sector.



The Commission put forward new rules for **instant payments in euro**, which were adopted in February 2024. We also set out principles for a future **digital euro**.



The EU was one of the **first jurisdictions in the world** to implement the unprecedented tax agreement set out by the OECD. The Commission put forward a Directive setting a **minimum effective tax rate of 15 % for multinational companies active in EU Member States**. It is in effect since January 2024.



The Commission has proposed key initiatives to reduce tax compliance costs, including **“Business in Europe: Framework for Income Taxation” (BEFIT)**. BEFIT will introduce a single set of rules to determine the tax base of groups of companies. This will reduce compliance costs for businesses that operate in more than one Member State.



The von der Leyen Commission has put forward **the most ambitious and comprehensive reform of the EU Customs Union since its establishment in 1968**. Our reform will **simplify customs reporting requirements for traders**.

A social market economy that cares

The competitiveness of our social market economy is built on our human capital – on the skills and the wellbeing of our workers. Since the beginning of the mandate, this has been at the core of our action.

We established the **Pact for Skills**, to give workers the training that they need to match business' needs, and we backed it with **€65 billion worth of investments in skills from the EU budget and NextGenerationEU**. This is paramount for our people and for our companies, as two thirds of SMEs in Europe say they cannot find the talent that they need.

Nikola has been working for over 12 years in the Maritsa Iztok coal mining complex in **Bulgaria**, one of the largest of its kind in South-East Europe. He decided to acquire **new skills for the future**. As part of the **European Year of Skills**, he has joined the **RES-SKILL project**, which is retraining coal workers for the **renewable energy sector**. With the new qualifications, he will be ready for the modern, clean economy.



But our competitiveness is also built on working conditions that allow our workers to thrive and to focus on their job. The von der Leyen Commission promised and delivered: we now have an EU framework to **improve the adequacy of minimum wages**. Workers should earn wages that allow for a decent living wherever they work.

As new ways of work emerge, they also come with challenges, for instance in terms of access to labour rights and social protection. This is why we proposed rules to improve the working conditions in platform work – as we committed to at the start of this Commission's mandate. In 2021, over 500 digital platforms were active in the EU offering work to over 28 million people – most of them are self-employed but others are in fact workers.

We also set out rules on **pay transparency**, to make the basic principle that **equal work deserves equal pay a reality, no matter whether you are a woman or a man**. And we introduced a **Child Guarantee**, so that families in need can afford childcare, and that mothers and fathers are able to both work and have a family. Europe needs all of its talent.

We also succeeded in pushing over the line a long-lasting goal: **to bring more women in Europe's corporate boardrooms**. With the adoption of the 'Women on boards' Directive, which had been stuck for a decade, our Union has now in place **a target of 40 % of non-executive directors in listed companies to be women**. This is good news for women, as it breaks the glass ceiling. And it is good

news for our economy, as companies that embrace diversity are more successful.



During this mandate, the Commission also put forward novel initiatives against racism and anti-semitism, but also for LGBTIQ people, individuals with disabilities, and Roma. We worked for a better Union, where Europeans of all colours, faiths, ages, genders, and sexual orientations can thrive.



A target of
40 %
of **women** **non-executive directors**
in listed companies

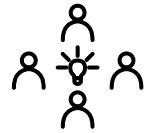
KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



The Commission set out an Action Plan to bring the **European Pillar of Social Rights** to life. The Action Plan sets clear targets for the EU to reach by 2030: to reach **78 % of employment, ensure participation of 60 % of adults in yearly training, and reduce the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion by at least 15 million.**



At the end of January 2024, President von der Leyen co-hosted the **Val Duchesse Social Partners Summit**, bringing EU institutions and social partners together to strengthen social dialogue.



To ensure future prosperity and wellbeing in the EU, it is crucial to address the challenges brought about by the demographic transition. The Commission put forward the **Demography Toolbox**.

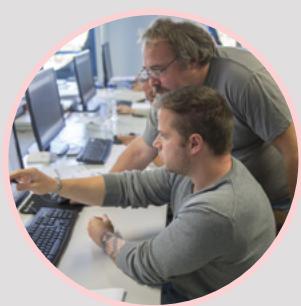
The toolbox is structured around four pillars: (i) supporting parents to better reconcile family aspirations and paid work, (ii) supporting and empowering younger generations, (iii) empowering older generations and sustaining their welfare, and (iv) addressing labour shortages through managed legal migration where necessary.

EU social targets by 2030



At least
78 %
of the population aged 20 to 64 should be in **employment** by 2030

2021



At least
60 %
of all adults should **participate in training** every year by 2030

2021



At least
15 million
fewer people at **risks of poverty or social exclusion** by 2030

An economy that works for people

ECONOMIC SITUATION

The EU economy continues to show remarkable resilience amid the successive economic shocks of recent years.

Strong economic rebound

In the period 2021-2023 (*) the EU economy rebounded by **10 %** compared to the 2020 level.

Expansion

The expansion was supported by a **robust labour market**, with unemployment rates hitting record lows and increasing employment.

Unemployment

Total unemployment rate in the EU, seasonally adjusted



Source: Eurostat.

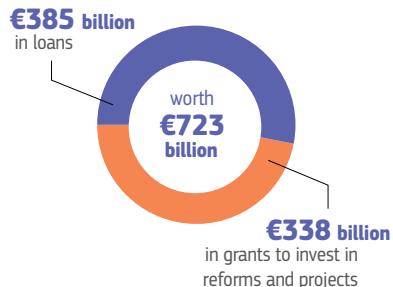
NEXTGENERATIONEU

NextGenerationEU is more than just a response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic: **It is a historic opportunity to build an economy that works for every citizen and business of the EU.**

Investment

A common European investment of **over €800 billion** to make Europe healthier, greener, and more digital.

Recovery and Resilience Facility



Disbursement

Altogether, almost **€225 billion** have already been disbursed, including **€67 billion** in pre-financing.

GDP

Investment funded by NextGenerationEU alone could boost the EU's GDP by approximately **1.4 %** in 2026 (**).

(*) This includes preliminary data for 2023.

(**) This does not include the significant growth-enhancing impact of reforms in recovery plans.

INVESTING IN SKILLS

European Year of Skills

With the European Skills Agenda, the EU is investing heavily in **lifelong learning**, to adapt people's skills to the ever-changing labour market.

Over **2,000 events** and meetings placed skills centre-stage during the European Year of Skills.

Funds

The EU is investing around **€65 billion** in skills programmes, mostly via the Recovery and Resilience Facility and the European Social Fund Plus.

Pact for Skills

In 2022, **2 million** people benefited from upskilling and reskilling activities under the Pact for Skills.

15,500 training programmes have been updated or developed under the Pact in 2022.



SINGLE MARKET

For three decades, we have crafted a powerful single market, **the world's largest market**, with a strong social dimension.

GDP

It amounts to



15 % of global GDP

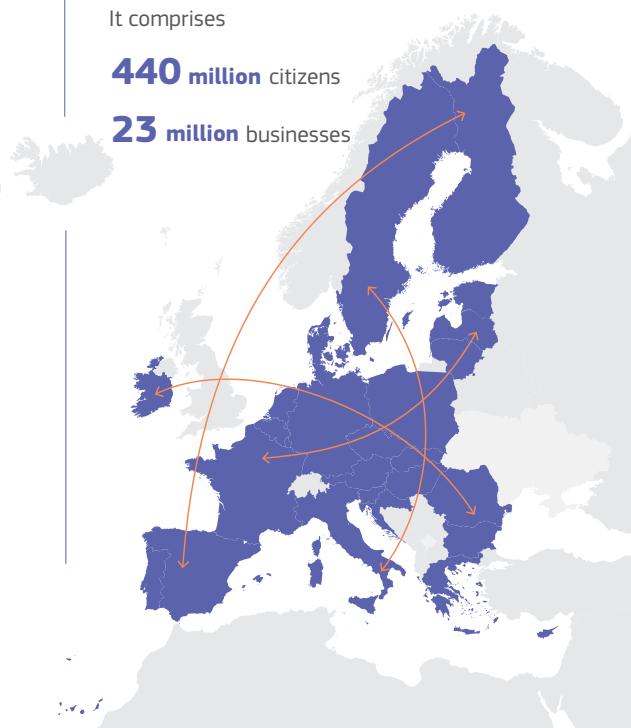
It is estimated to have increased the EU's GDP by an additional **9 %** since its creation three decades ago.

Size

It comprises

440 million citizens

23 million businesses





In order to help the next generation of Europeans thrive, the Commission put forward a Recommendation establishing a **European Child Guarantee**, ensuring that every child at risk of poverty has access to the most basic rights while also helping parents not to have to choose between working and having a family.



Thanks to **EU funding**, a **childcare facility** in Cyprus' industrial zone of Agios Athanasios allows young parents, in particular women, to **work and provide for their family** while ensuring that their **children are taken care of** very close to their working area.



This Commission also launched the **Youth Employment Support programme**, aiming to **provide a bridge to jobs for the next generation**. At the heart of this initiative stands the **reinforced Youth Guarantee**. The Youth Guarantee ensures that **young people under 30 are offered a job, continued education, a traineeship, or an apprenticeship** within 4 months of becoming unemployed or leaving education.

Since November 2022, we have new rules **to improve the adequacy of minimum wages in countries with statutory minimum wages**, establishing clear criteria for wage setting and updates. The rules also **promote more collective bargaining** and better enforcement and monitoring.

The Commission has also introduced ground-breaking rules on **pay transparency**, which will help to **close the gender pay gap**. The rules will help to enforce **the principle of equal pay between women and men**, and they will **improve access to justice for victims of pay discrimination**.



During this mandate, co-legislators have also agreed on new rules that will **criminalise physical violence, as well as psychological, economic and sexual violence against women across the EU**.

With the intention of improving health and safety at work, the Commission set out a **2021-2027 EU strategic framework on health and safety at work**.

We presented several proposals to limit the risks that workers face from the exposure to dangerous substances, including asbestos, lead, diisocyanates, and other **carcinogens, mutagens and reprotoxic substances**.

37 families got back into homes during 2021-2023 in Košice, after experiencing chronic homelessness, thanks to **Košice's and Slovakia's "Combatting Homelessness Plan"**. With **support from the European Social Fund**, local NGOs, led by Foundation DEDO, helped the families find and retain housing.



© Nadácia DEDO, 2021



This Commission has also proposed a **new comprehensive approach to mental health**. The plan focuses on the most vulnerable, such as children, young people, and the elderly, and it includes **20 flagship initiatives and €1.23 billion in funding** for education and awareness raising.

The Commission has laid the ground to build a **Union of Equality**. Along with a strategy on gender equality, we have put in place the first-ever **anti-racism action plan** and the first-ever **EU strategy against anti-semitism** and on **fostering Jewish life**. This Commission also adopted the first-ever **LGBTIQ strategy**. In October 2020, we strengthened a framework to support **Roma** in the EU.



In March 2021, we adopted the **2021-2030 Strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities**. Co-legislators have already agreed on the Commission's proposal for a **European Disability Card** and a **European Parking Card for persons with disabilities**.

Tackling irregular migration

Europe is a continent whose history has been shaped by many peoples. We will always stand by our obligations to provide safety to people who seek international protection, and we are proud to offer legal migration pathways that will also benefit European societies and economies. However, in past crises when unprecedented numbers of refugees and irregular migrants entered the EU, it became clear that Europe did not have the right tools to cope with the pressures.

At the start of this Commission's mandate, we therefore committed to establish a **common system to better manage migration in the EU**. This is why we proposed a new **Pact on Migration and Asylum**.



After complex political and legal negotiations, Member States and the European Parliament reached an agreement on this comprehensive set of rules, **giving Europe a fresh start**, where for decades we have only seen blockage and stagnation.

With the new rules, we will better **secure control of our external border**.

We are **making asylum, return and border procedures quicker and more effective**, with stricter time limits and more stringent rules to limit abusive or subsequent applications, with the necessary guarantees for individuals. Return decisions for those without a right to stay will be issued immediately.

Greece is pioneering an **integration project**, funded by **NextGenerationEU**, whereby **refugees and migrants**, including persons with disabilities, are **trained in fire and earthquake protection**. The project brings local residents and migrants closer together to confront common challenges.



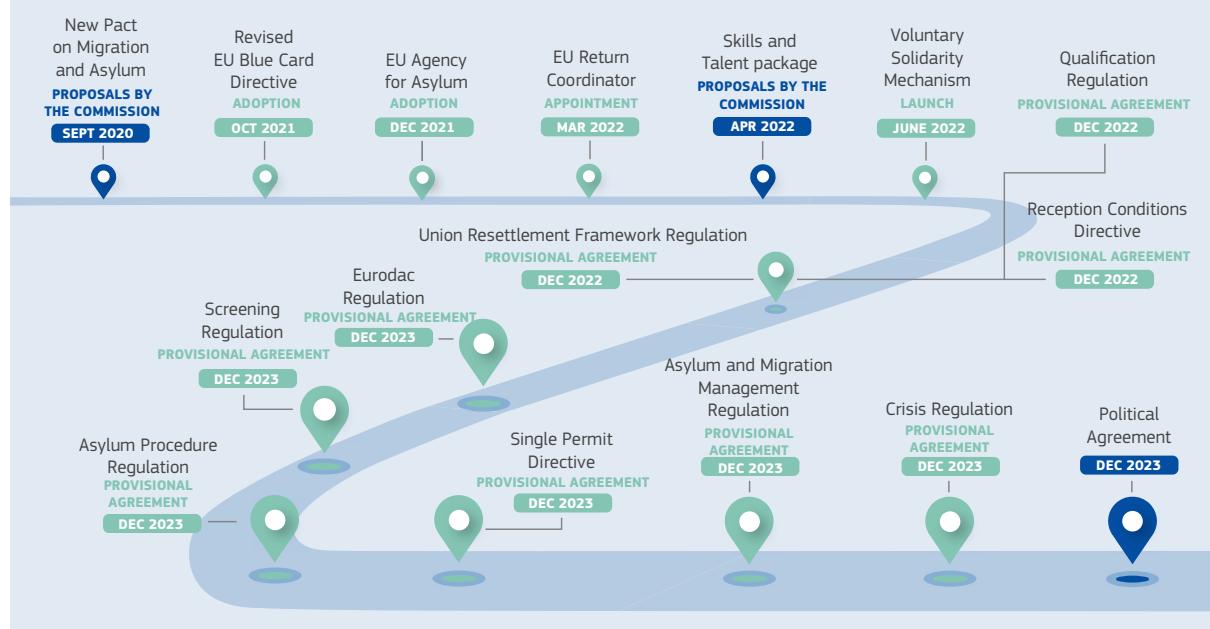
And we have now clearer rules on the responsibility of Member States, with **improved measures to limit secondary movements**.

Member States will support each other using a flexible but permanent solidarity mechanism. Each of them will be able to choose the type of solidarity that they wish to provide. Our Union is now better equipped to manage migration.

In parallel with developing more effective legislation, throughout this mandate, the Commission supported Member States to address **immediate challenges** – from increased arrivals in the Mediterranean to the instrumentalisation of migration by Belarus – with operational support and with assistance from EU agencies. And we built **partnerships with third countries** to fight smuggling and increase returns.

The comprehensive partnership that we signed with **Tunisia**, for instance, brings mutual benefits beyond migration – from energy and education to skills and security. This is the blueprint for other agreements to be signed with partner countries, to foster cooperation and improve migration management.

NEW PACT ON MIGRATION AND ASYLUM: TIMELINE AND MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



With the **New Pact on Migration and Asylum**, the Commission provides strong provisions to deliver a long-term, sustainable solution to **build a common EU system for managing migration**. The new rules will ensure a **robust and fair migration and asylum management**.



A key element of the Pact is the fair sharing of **responsibility** and **solidarity**.

New rules will clarify the **criteria for granting international protection, the rights and obligations of refugees, and introduce stricter rules sanctioning unauthorised movements within the EU.**

Unaccompanied minors will receive immediate assistance, and Member States will ensure asylum seekers with well-founded claims have the **right to work**.

To remain competitive, the European Commission proposed measures to **attract the skills and talent** that our economies and our societies need.



The **Blue Card Directive** allows highly qualified workers from non-EU countries to benefit from fast-track admission procedures to come to the EU and contribute to its economic competitiveness.

The new **Single Permit Directive** rules provide common rights for workers from non-EU countries, regarding working conditions, social security, recognition of qualifications, and tax benefits.



The Commission has pursued innovative **Talent Partnerships** with key partner countries, including Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. They will allow people from those countries to come work, study, and train in the EU, developing new skills that can later benefit their countries of origin.



During this mandate, the Commission has put forward **four action plans** for the main migration routes: the **Central Mediterranean, Western Balkans, Western Mediterranean and the Atlantic, and Eastern Mediterranean**. When Italy faced a sharp increase in irregular arrivals in summer 2023, President **von der Leyen** launched the **10-point plan for Lampedusa**.



The Action Plans have yielded results. For example, in the Western Balkans, arrivals in 2023 **decreased by 31 % compared to 2022**.



The Commission has also provided **financial support to Member States**. Around €6 billion from the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (2019–2023) have been disbursed to support Member States in managing migration; €3 billion from the Internal Security Fund – Borders and Visa (2019–2020) were provided for border management; and €1 billion from the Internal Security Fund – Police (2019–2020) contributed to strengthening security.

The Commission launched a Call to Action for a **Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling** at an international conference in Brussels joined by countries around the globe. At the same time, we also proposed **new legislation to prevent and fight migrant smuggling**, updating the 20-year-old legislative framework, to introduce minimum rules to counter the facilitation of unauthorised entry, transit and stay in the EU.

Strengthening democracy and the rule of law

At the beginning of the mandate, the von der Leyen Commission committed to **prioritise the rule of law and give a new push to European democracy**. Many events within and outside our Union have proved us right: **we cannot take democracy for granted**. We have to fight for it every day anew. This Commission has developed legislation to defend and strengthen democracy, counter foreign interference, fight disinformation and protect the freedom and pluralism of the media, as well as the safety of journalists.

And we took unprecedented action to uphold the rule of law in all Member States. We put in place an **annual Rule of Law Report**, with tailored recommendations for each Member State to prevent breaches of the rule of law and to strengthen it further. When dialogue was not enough, we used all the tools at our disposal, including **infringements or the Budget Conditionality Mechanism**.

This allows the suspension of payments from the EU budget in case the rule of law is not upheld in a Member State. At the Commission's request, this provision was activated for **Hungary**.

We have addressed challenges to the rule of law firmly, to protect our European democracy and our free and open societies.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



With the **European Democracy Action Plan** the Commission has taken concrete steps to promote free and fair elections, strengthen media freedom and counter disinformation.

The Commission set out laws on **political advertising**, electoral rights and party funding. When they enter into force, **political ads will have to be labelled as such and will have to include a clear reference to who is paying for them**.



With the **European Media Freedom Act**, the Commission laid out for the first time a set of common safeguards to protect media freedom and pluralism in Europe, including to protect editorial independence and media pluralism, and ensure the independent functioning of public service media.



Infringement procedures are a key tool to protect the rule of law, and with its **new Conditionality Mechanism** the EU now has the power to **withhold EU funds when rule of law breaches occur**.



To effectively fight the risk of **corruption**, the Commission adopted, in May 2023, a package of **anti-corruption measures**, which includes rules criminalising corruption offences and harmonising penalties across the EU. And we now monitor developments relevant to the fight against corruption in the annual Rule of Law Report.



For the first time, the Commission has laid out common safeguards **protecting media freedom and pluralism in Europe** and introduced legislation **protecting journalists and human rights defenders from Strategic Lawsuits against Public Participation (SLAPP)**.



The Commission proposed the creation of an **Ethics Body covering all EU institutions** which will set standards on ethics for all institutions and ensure regular coordination between them.

We closed the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism (CVM) that had been introduced upon the accession of **Bulgaria and Romania** as a transitional measure to facilitate progress in the fields of judicial reform and the fight against corruption. With the two Member States having achieved remarkable progress, it was a matter of fairness to bring the CVM to an end.



To strengthen citizen engagement, the Commission played a leading role in the **Conference on the Future of Europe**. More than five million unique users visited the Conference's digital platform. Over 700 000 participants attended events across our Union.

Concluding on 9 May 2022, the Conference's participants presented a report, which contained **49 proposals** on topics such as security, the digital transformation, education, culture, youth, sport and more.

The Commission has acted on close to 95 % of the measures proposed by the Conference on the Future of Europe that are within its remit. Our 2023 and 2024 Commission work programmes have been driven by the results of the Conference.



The Commission has also upgraded the **Have Your Say portal** into a single-entry point for all our citizens' engagement tools.

We have made important progress on key legislative files, **putting forward over 840 proposals**. Thanks to effective cooperation with the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, **almost 75 % of all legislative proposals managed by this Commission have been agreed**.



A stronger and bolder Europe in the world

In recent years, the von der Leyen Commission has shown many times how tremendous challenges can be overcome when **working with friends and partners**. The EU's ability to form powerful alliances across the world has helped strengthen Europe's role globally.

The first visit of the current College of Commissioners was to Africa. The work of the von der Leyen Commission has brought **relations with the United States to new levels**, through close cooperation in support of Ukraine, as well as on energy, climate action, trade and technology.

It has also helped reset post-Brexit relations with the **United Kingdom**. We negotiated the **Windsor Framework**, which has put one of our most important relations in Europe back on a positive path.

And we developed a new generation of partnerships with **Global Gateway**, Europe's largest global investment programme ever. Global Gateway, worth **€300 billion**, is our offer for quality investment and infrastructure projects that **respect high environmental and social standards and create jobs and growth locally**.

Global Gateway is about developing **win-win partnerships** taking into account our partners' as well as the EU's interests in a geopolitical perspective.

And it is already delivering. **Over 200 flagship projects have been selected**, with €66 billion in investment from strategic partnerships on raw materials with Namibia, Chile and Argentina, to collaboration on renewable hydrogen with Morocco and Egypt, or a digital submarine cable system, called Medusa, linking the EU with North African countries. Many more will come.



Europe's largest global investment programme ever



Worth
€300 billion



Over
200 flagship projects have been selected

Global Gateway is supporting the ambitious **Lobito Corridor project**. The Corridor will connect the southern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the north-western part of Zambia, and the Port of Lobito in Angola. This will **boost the access of the DRC and Zambia to the global trade markets** by improving circulation of goods and mobility of citizens.



Implemented in a 'Team Europe' approach – EU institutions and EU Member States working together – Global Gateway not only supports the clean and digital transitions around the world, but also increases the EU's clout on the world stage.

Europe is consolidating its reputation as a reliable long-term partner, working for mutual benefits.

GLOBAL GATEWAY: 5 INVESTMENT PRIORITIES



DIGITAL

The EU supports open and secure internet



CLIMATE AND ENERGY

The EU supports investments and rules paving the way to the clean energy transition



TRANSPORT

The EU supports all modes of green, smart and safe transport



HEALTH

The EU helps strengthen supply chains and local vaccines production



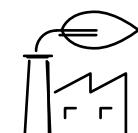
EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

The EU invests in high quality education, with a special focus on girls and women and vulnerable groups

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



The von der Leyen Commission cemented its role as a **world leader in climate action** through the **European Green Deal** and its intensive work ensuring that our partners around the world live up to the **commitments under the Paris Agreement**.



We concluded **Green Alliances and Partnerships** with close partners such as Canada, Japan, Morocco, Norway, and the Republic of Korea; and we launched **Just Energy Transition Partnerships** with South Africa, Senegal, Indonesia, and Vietnam to support them in their clean transition.



The von der Leyen Commission has pushed to **complete our European family**. In December 2023, the European Council greenlighted the start of accession negotiations with **Ukraine** and **Moldova**. In 2022 we started accession negotiations with **Albania** and **North Macedonia**; while **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, and **Georgia**, have been granted EU candidate status.



Additionally, with €6 billion in funding, the Commission's **Growth Plan for the Western Balkans** will bring some of the **benefits of membership in advance of accession and boost economic growth** in the Western Balkans.

The Commission has put **EU-US relations back on track** after a period marked by disagreements. We launched the **EU-US Trade and Technology Council (TTC)** in 2021, which has become a privileged forum for bilateral exchanges. We have advanced the **EU-US Energy Council and Dialogue**, and we established a new Task Force on Energy Security. And we have coordinated closely in our **joint commitment to supporting Ukraine** in its war against the Russian aggression.





Following the **brutal terrorist attacks of Hamas against Israel**, we condemned Hamas in the strongest possible terms. We stand for Israel's right to defend itself and we have reiterated the need to do so in line with international law and international humanitarian law, **ensuring the protection of the civilian population**.

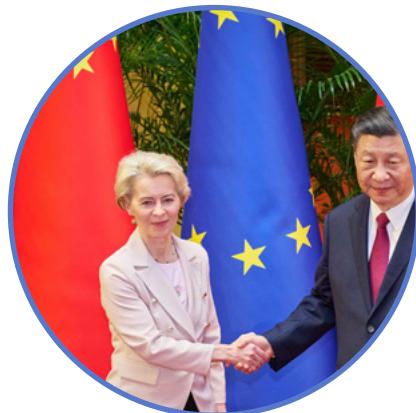
As the conflict intensified, we rapidly mobilised to provide humanitarian support to the Palestinian people in Gaza. In October 2023, we **quadrupled emergency aid to Palestinians, including through a dedicated Humanitarian Air Bridge operation**.

With over **40 flights**, we have since delivered more than **1 700 tonnes** of humanitarian relief items, including medical supplies, shelters, nutrition, logistics material and buses.

We remain fully committed to working with regional and international partners to prevent the escalation of the conflict and to achieve a lasting solution based on a two-State solution.



Trade has remained robust thanks to a record number of trade deals (42 preferential agreements with 74 countries). In this mandate, the Commission has **concluded five modern trade negotiations**: three new-generation Free Trade Agreements with **New Zealand, Chile, and Kenya**, which reflect our trade and sustainable development strategy including high standards of environmental protection and social rights; likewise, we concluded our first-ever sustainable investment deal with **Angola**, and a data flows deal with **Japan**.



The Commission has developed a **new strategy on relationship with China**, focused on **“de-risking”** rather than decoupling. We have kept communication lines open and worked together to address common challenges such as climate change. We have consistently spoken out about the deteriorating **human rights situation**. And we have put in place measures to address security concerns, whether on 5G, foreign direct investment, export controls, or to counter economic distortions and deter economic coercion.

Working together as a Union

Every day since the start of the mandate, this Commission has worked to make Europe more united and stronger. At home, we have weathered together unprecedented crises.

On the world stage, our Team Europe approach has enabled the EU to be more strategic, assertive and united.

Throughout this mandate, we have seen the birth of a real geopolitical Union – supporting Ukraine, standing up to Russia's aggression, promoting the rules-based order and investing in partnerships

We promised to be bold and ambitious. We stayed the course and delivered.







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